United Nations ST/IC/2005/7

Secretariat

20 January 2005

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **Review of staff claims for dependency benefits for 2003 and other staff information**

1. The purpose of the present circular is to inform staff members at Headquarters and the staff of United Nations Information Centres, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and field missions as well as project personnel administered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the manner in which the review of their entitlements to dependency benefits for 2003 will be conducted.

2. For all staff at Headquarters, a new electronic system called e-P.84 is being introduced as a pilot project. All staff at Headquarters who have a dependant recognized by the United Nations and who have access to computers will review their dependency data and submit proposed changes directly online to the Office of Human Resources Management. Staff members using the e-P.84 will be given the option either to submit the required documentation at the time of their submission of e-P.84 to the Office of Human Resources Management or to retain the documentation personally. Staff who opt to submit the required documentation must present all such documentation. There is no option to submit partial documentation. Staff who opt to retain the required documentation must obtain and retain for five years the proof or supporting documentation to substantiate their dependency claim. Please note that, for monitoring purposes, the Office of Human Resources Management can request a staff member to submit the required documentation at any time and as often as necessary during the five-year period.

3. All staff at Headquarters who do not have access to computers and all staff of the United Nations Information Centres, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and field missions as well as project personnel administered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs outside of New York will continue to use the dependency benefits questionnaire (form P.84) for the review of their entitlement to dependency benefits. Staff members at Headquarters who do not have access to computers

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 March 2005.

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should contact the OHRM section identified in paragraph 11 below to obtain a hard copy of form P.84. Staff members in all other areas mentioned above will receive their individual 2003 P.84 form from the office responsible for the review of their claims.

4. With the implementation of the electronic P.84, staff members are reminded that it is their responsibility to adhere to the guidelines laid out in the present information circular and to ensure that the records and documentation on their dependency entitlements, whether submitted to the Office of Human Resources Management or retained for the five-year period, are maintained in an up-to-date and accurate manner at all times.

5. Failure to provide the documentation upon request will result in immediate recovery and discontinuance of the benefit as set out in paragraph 40 below. False certification of the information contained in the e-P.84 or form P.84 or misrepresentation of facts related to a claim for dependency benefits will lead to disciplinary action. Pursuant to section 3.2 of ST/AI/2000/11, the two-year limitation of the recovery shall not apply in such cases.

I. Submission of claims using the electronic P.84

6. The electronic P.84 will enable staff to review their dependency data and submit proposed changes directly online. Staff members at Headquarters who were in receipt of a dependency benefit in 2003 may access the e-P.84 from the "My UN" web site, http://myun.un.org (see annex I for procedure). On that site, staff are required to review all dependency-related data, make proposed changes if applicable or confirm the correctness of the information, and submit it electronically by **28 February 2005** in order to substantiate their claim for dependency benefits received for 2003. In order for staff members at Headquarters to have access to the e-P.84, they must have first authenticated their My UN account through the e-Contact process introduced through Galaxy earlier in 2004. Those who have not received an e-mail on authenticating the My UN account should contact hrsupport@un.org or call 212-963-9711 before attempting to access the e-P.84. Staff members who have no recognized dependants will not have access to the e-P.84.

7. The e-P.84 will contain the information currently recorded for each staff member with recognized dependants in the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS). Staff members are requested to review that information carefully, including the question regarding Government assistance, make any necessary changes or corrections and certify directly online the accuracy of the information contained in the e-P.84. Staff members must also indicate in the e-P.84 whether or not they opt to submit to the Office of Human Resources Management the required documentation, which is listed in annex II of the present circular. Please note that this option does not apply to a staff member who claims a dependency benefit for a child who is not in his/her custody. He/she must always submit the required documentation.

8. No documentation is required for a staff member to continue receiving dependency benefits for the following dependants: an unemployed spouse, a child under the age of 18 if in the staff member's custody or a secondary dependant residing with the staff member. On the electronic form, staff members should indicate that no documentation is required.

9. Staff members may opt to submit or to retain the supporting documentation listed in annex II for the following cases: a dependent spouse who has occupational earnings, a child between the age of 18 and 21, and a secondary dependant who does not reside with the staff member. On the electronic form, staff members should indicate whether they opt for submission of supporting documentation or for retention of supporting documentation for five years. Those who selected the option of not submitting the documentation must obtain and retain the documentation for five years. As mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, the monitoring by the Office of Human Resources Management may take place at any time and as often as necessary. The Office of Human Resources Management will monitor at least 20 per cent of all submitted cases every year.

10. Staff members opting for the submission of supporting documentation are requested to submit that documentation to the section that services their area, as identified in paragraph 11 below. Staff members at Headquarters who do not have access to a computer are also requested to submit the hard copy of the P.84 questionnaire form together with the necessary supporting documentation to the offices identified below. Staff members who are applying for a dependency allowance or benefit for the first time must apply in person at the section that services their area.

11. Please note the locations of the sections and areas serviced, as follows:

- Common Services Activities at Headquarters Section, Room S-2410: Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management, Department of Management, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, Office of Internal Oversight Services and United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and Department of Safety and Security
- Offices at Headquarters with Field Activities Section, Room DC1-0218: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission
- Economic, Social, Political, Legal and Information Activities Section, Room S-2445: Department for Disarmament Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Political Affairs, Department of Public Information (including all the information centres), International Civil Service Commission, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, Office of Legal Affairs, Regional Commissions New York Office and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
- Overseas Offices Section, Room S-2435: International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and liaison offices

12. Please refer to paragraphs 17 to 35 for the different types of dependency benefits.

II. Submission of claims using the hard copy P.84 questionnaire

13. All staff at Headquarters who do not have access to computers and staff of the United Nations Information Centres, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and field missions as well as project personnel administered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs outside of New York will continue to use the P.84 dependency questionnaire form for the review of their entitlement to dependency benefits.

14. Staff members assigned to United Nations peacekeeping missions and those serving in established missions who were in receipt of a dependency benefit in 2003 will receive a dependency questionnaire form P.84 from the Office of the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer of the respective mission. Those staff members should return the completed P.84 form to the Office of the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer, which will then transmit the form to the Personnel Management and Support Service of the Office of Mission Support, Department of Peacekeeping Operations (Room DC1-928). Project personnel administered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs serving at Headquarters and in the field should submit their questionnaires to Technical Cooperation Management Services (Room DC1-1200). They are also required to submit the supporting documentation at that time. All other offices away from Headquarters will review dependency claims for their own staff.

15. The P.84 questionnaire form will contain the information currently recorded for each staff member and his or her dependants in IMIS. Staff members are requested to review that information carefully, make any necessary corrections and certify the accuracy of the information contained in the form, including the question regarding the amount of Government assistance for each child in item 40 of the P.84 form.

16. When it is necessary for support payments to be documented, the following will be considered as acceptable proof: original cancelled cheques, money order receipts, wire transfer receipts and original records of bank transactions.

III. Types of dependency benefits

17. Dependency benefits may be paid on account of a dependent spouse, a dependent child or children or a secondary dependant. For ease of reference, a dependent spouse, child or children are referred to in the present circular as "primary dependants". A "secondary dependant" may be the mother, father, brother or sister of the staff member of whose financial support the staff member provides one half or more, and in any case at least twice the amount of the relevant dependency allowance.

18. Staff members in the Professional category and above and in the Field Service category will be paid salary and post adjustment at the dependency rate for the first recognized primary dependant, which may be a spouse or a child. A dependency allowance will be paid for each additional primary dependant at the rates approved by the General Assembly. The rates applicable for 2003 are contained in information circulars ST/IC/2001/4 and Add.1.

19. Staff members in the General Service and related categories will receive a dependency allowance for each recognized primary dependant, which may be a spouse or a child or children. The amounts are set out in the local salary scales, as periodically revised, which are established for every duty station.

20. Dependency benefits on account of children with a disability will be paid in accordance with the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/8 of 13 September 2000.

21. When a secondary dependant is recognized, a benefit will be paid at the rate determined by the General Assembly for staff in the Professional category and above and in the Field Service category. For staff in the General Service and related categories, the allowance will be paid in the amount set out in the local salary scales, as periodically revised, which are established for every duty station.

Claim for dependent spouse

22. A spouse will be recognized as a dependant when his or her gross occupational earnings, if any, do not exceed the limit established for this purpose in paragraph (a) of staff rule 103.24 for a particular calendar year. In New York, the earnings limit for 2003 was $32,644 (gross salary in effect on 1 January of the year concerned for a staff member at the G-2, step I, level). For 2004, the earnings limit in New York is $33,417. For a spouse working in a country other than that of the staff member's duty station, the limit is the gross salary of the lowest entry level of the General Service salary scale applicable in the country of the spouse's place of work. For staff in the Professional category and above serving at any duty station, the limit may not be less than the equivalent of the G-2, step I, gross salary for New York. All earnings limits are based on the salary scales in effect on 1 January of the year concerned.

23. However, when a staff member is married to another staff member or to a staff member of another organization of the United Nations common system, and both husband and wife are in the Professional category and above or in the Field Service category, and there is no dependent child, each shall be paid salary and post adjustment at the single rate even if the earnings do not exceed the yearly earnings limit, as provided in staff rule 103.17 (c) and paragraph 2.4 of ST/AI/2000/8.

24. Pension and/or investment income are not considered occupational earnings and accordingly are not taken into account in determining a staff member's eligibility for the dependent spouse benefit.

25. When the spouse's gross occupational earnings are more than the earnings limit but less than the sum of the earnings limit and the appropriate dependency benefit, an adjusted dependency benefit for a spouse may be paid to (a) staff members in the Professional category and above and in the Field Service category who have no dependent children, and (b) staff members in the General Service and related categories, with or without dependent children. The adjusted benefit will be equal to the amount by which the sum of the earnings limit and the appropriate dependency benefit exceeds the spouse's gross occupational earnings.

26. Staff members who received a dependent spouse allowance or benefit for 2003 should submit or retain proof of their spouse's gross occupational earnings for that year. The list of acceptable supporting documentation as evidence of a staff

member's entitlement to a dependent spouse benefit for 2003 is contained in annex II. It is also applicable to staff members serving on an appointment of limited duration under the 300 series of the Staff Rules who claim a dependant, for purposes of the family element of the service allowance.

Claim for dependent child or children

27. The conditions for recognition of a dependency benefit on account of a child or children of the staff member are set out in paragraph (b) of staff rule 103.24 and administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/8.

28. A dependent child is a child for whom the staff member provides main and continuing support. A dependent child may be a natural child, a legally adopted child or a stepchild if the stepchild resides with the staff member. The child must be under the age of 18 years or, if in full-time attendance at a school, university or similar educational institution, under the age of 21 years.

29. If legal adoption is not possible because there is no statutory provision for adoption or any prescribed court procedure for formal recognition of customary or de facto adoption in the staff member's home country or country of permanent residence, a child may nevertheless be recognized as a dependant if the following conditions are met:

(a) The child resides with the staff member;

(b) The staff member can be regarded as having established a parental relationship with the child;

(c) The child is not a brother or sister of the staff member;

(d) The number of children for whom dependency benefits are claimed in cases where legal adoption is not possible does not exceed three.

30. The age and school attendance requirements indicated in paragraph 28 above are waived if the child is physically or mentally incapacitated for substantial gainful employment, either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration (see ST/AI/2000/8).

31. If a staff member or his/her spouse received in 2003 a dependency benefit in the form of a government grant in respect of a child, the staff member is requested to report the total amount of the grant received in respect of each child, the country from which the grant was received and the currency of the grant (if other than United States dollars). The amount of the grant will be subtracted from any dependency benefit payable by the United Nations on account of the dependent child or children.

32. When a child previously recognized as a dependant marries, the staff member has the responsibility to give written notice to the Office of Human Resources Management or the relevant personnel office. If the staff member continues to claim the child as a dependant, documentary evidence of support satisfactory to the Secretary-General will be required to substantiate the claim.

33. According to staff rule 103.17 (c), when two staff members are married to each other and have a dependent child or children, the dependent rate of staff assessment shall apply to the spouse having the higher salary level and the single rate to the

other, subject to staff rule 104.10 (d) allowing the Secretary-General to maintain separate entitlements and benefits in the event both husband and wife are staff members and maintain separate households because they are assigned to different duty stations. The same rules apply in the case of a staff member whose spouse is a staff member of another organization participating in the United Nations common system.

34. The list of acceptable supporting documentation required to be submitted or retained as evidence of a staff member's entitlement to a dependent child allowance or benefit for 2003 is contained in annex II. It is also applicable to staff members serving on an appointment of limited duration under the 300 series of the Staff Rules who claim a dependant, for purposes of the family element of the service allowance.

Secondary dependants

35. Paragraph (d) of staff rule 103.24 defines a secondary dependant as a father, mother, brother or sister of whose financial support the staff member provides one half or more, and in any case at least twice the amount of the dependency allowance. In order to be recognized as a dependant, a brother or sister must fulfil the age and school attendance requirements for a dependent child, which are recalled in paragraph 28 above, unless the brother or sister is physically or mentally incapacitated for substantial gainful employment, either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration.

36. At the time of establishment of an entitlement to a benefit for a secondary dependant, staff members should submit in person the original or certified true copy of the birth certificate or passport of the secondary dependant together with their own written statement that the secondary dependant relies upon the staff member for financial support and that the staff member provides one half or more of the dependant's support, and in any case at least twice the amount of the dependency allowance. If the secondary dependant does not reside with the staff member, the staff member should also submit evidence of a pattern of support payments made to the dependant. For 2003, the secondary dependant's allowance for staff in the Professional and Field Service categories was set at $693 and for staff in the General Service and related categories at $1,318 per year.

37. For a list of acceptable supporting documentation, please refer to annex II.

IV. Important reminders

38. Paragraph (c) of staff rule 103.23 and paragraph (b) of staff rule 104.4 place upon staff members the responsibility to notify the Secretary-General in writing of any changes in their marital status or the status of their dependants. For that purpose, staff members are required to communicate changes in the composition of their family or any other changes affecting their entitlement to dependency benefits promptly, including in those cases where a child between the ages of 18 and 21 ceases to be in full-time attendance at an educational institution, to the relevant personnel or Executive or Administrative Office. Staff members at Headquarters should inform the offices mentioned in paragraph 11 of those changes.

39. The change in the review of dependency benefits will be monitored by the Office of Human Resources Management and audited by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Staff members must provide the documentation upon request by the Office of Human Resources Management or in the event of audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Failure to do so will result in immediate recovery of monies and discontinuance of benefits, and may result in disciplinary action. Therefore, staff members are requested to keep complete records justifying their claims of dependency benefits for at least five years.

40. Information provided on the e-P.84 and form P.84 and supporting documentation will be periodically monitored to verify staff members' continued entitlement to dependency benefits. For those staff members who do not submit the e-P.84 and P.84 questionnaire forms and any requisite documentation by **28 February 2005 (15 March 2005**, for staff serving in field missions and information centres), any dependency benefits will be discontinued and will result in recovery of any overpayment as indicated in paragraph 5 above. Prior to the recovery of any overpayment, and in accordance with normal procedures, staff members will be advised in writing of the decision to recover and of the reasons for that decision. Recovery will be made through deductions of 20 per cent of the staff member's net monthly salary (excluding United Nations Federal Credit Union deductions) until such time as the full amount is recovered. In instances where the duration of the staff member's contract does not allow a deduction at as low a rate as 20 per cent, the overpayment will be deducted at a monthly rate sufficient to recover the full amount by the contract expiration date.

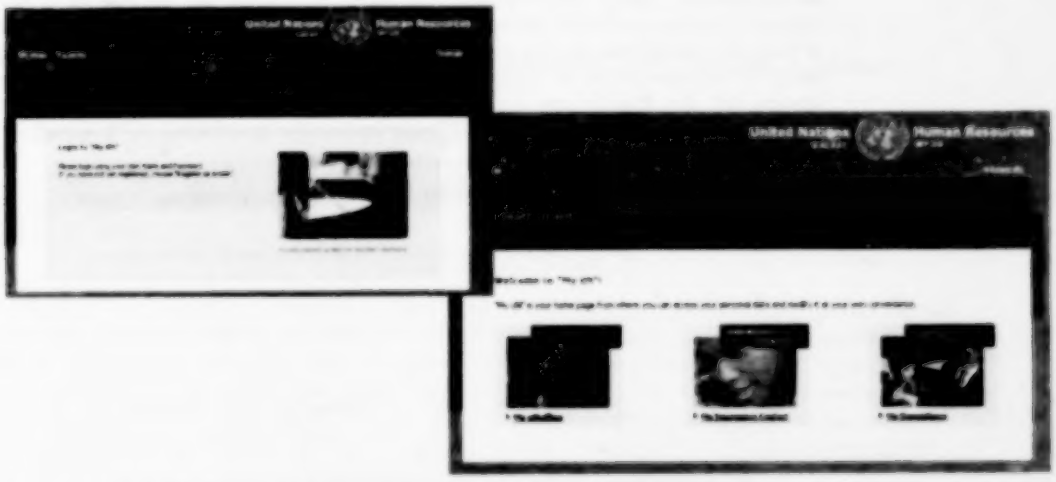
41. Staff members are reminded that changes in their P.2 form (Designation, change, or revocation of beneficiary) may be made at any time and that only the most recent, properly executed form for the designation of beneficiary or beneficiaries is recognized for the payment of benefits in the case of the demise of a staff member. It is the responsibility of the staff member to make sure that the proper person or persons are designated, particularly in cases of death, divorce or other change in the relationship between the person or persons previously designated and the staff member. The P.2 form is available on iSeek under Staff information/more.../Forms/Allowances and Benefits. Staff members wishing to change their designation of beneficiary should contact the above-mentioned offices (see para. 11) to ensure that the change submitted on the P.2 form is properly executed and recorded in IMIS. At the same time, staff members should ensure that their designation of the recipient of a United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund residual settlement (form PENS.E/2) is up to date. Staff members with changes in dependants are urged to ensure that their beneficiary designations for purposes of life insurance are up to date and that their health insurance coverage also reflects such changes.

42. In the event of a change of address, staff members should immediately inform their Office of Human Resources Management section through their Executive Office of the change so that it is properly recorded in IMIS.

Annex I

Procedures to complete the e-P.84

1. Log onto the "My UN" web site at http://myun.un.org and click on "My Dependency".



2. The four sections on the e-P.84 may indicate information relevant to the following:

   (a) Staff member

   (b) Spouse

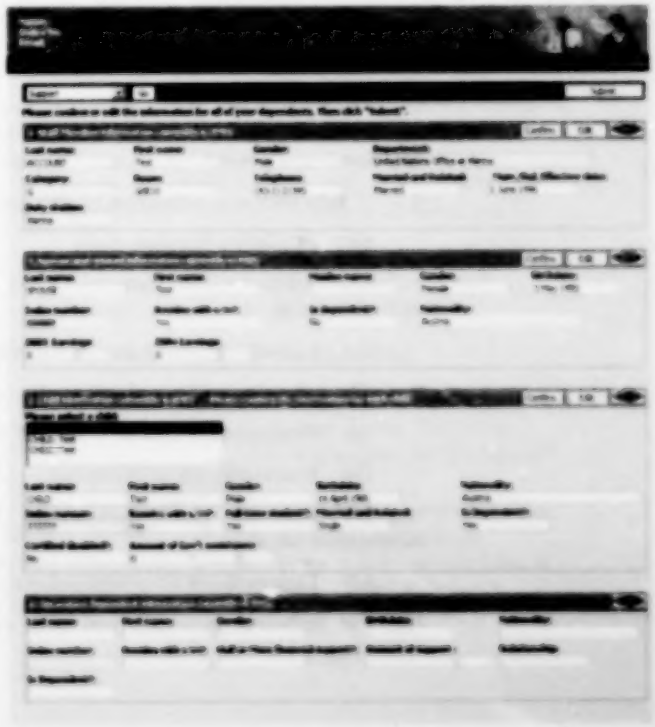
   (c) Dependent children

   (d) Secondary dependant

Staff must review each section carefully.

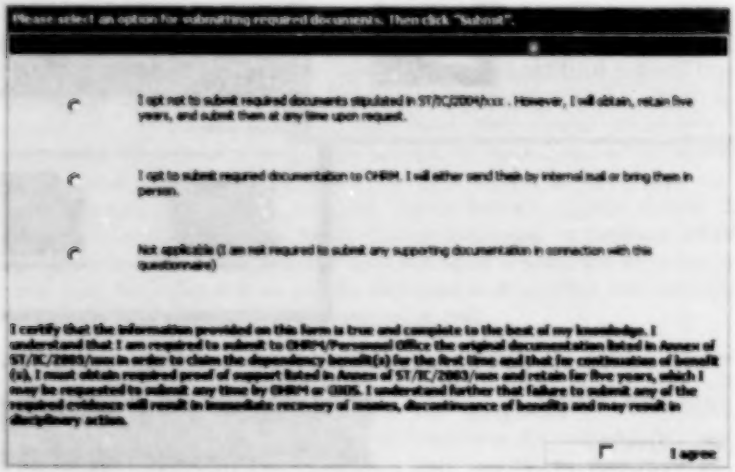
3. If you have no changes to make in a section, click the "**continue**" button, the "**confirm**" button; and then the "**submit**" button.

4. If you have changes or corrections in a section, click the "**edit**" button, make the necessary changes or corrections directly on the screen, click the "**continue**" button and then the "**confirm**" button. Please note that if you use the "**go back**" button to return to the previous screen, the system will delete all proposed changes you have just made. In that case, you are requested to re-enter all the proposed changes on the editing screen.



5. When you have made all the changes and corrections, click on the "**submit**" button. You will then see a comparison chart of current data and the proposed changes you have just entered. Review the screen once again and click the "**continue**" button. Please print this screen for your records.

6. The system will give you two options concerning the supporting documentation, asking you whether you prefer to submit the documents to the Office of Human Resources Management immediately or whether you would prefer to keep the documents for five years for auditing purposes. If you have no required proof or documentation to submit, please click the "**not applicable**" button. The system will also require you to certify that the information provided on the e-P.84 form is true and complete to the best of your knowledge by clicking on "**I agree**".



7. Once you have certified the information, you will receive an e-mail confirming the submission of your e-P.84 to the Office of Human Resources Management. The system will electronically notify your Human Resources Officer or Assistant of your submission.

8. A **help** button is accessible to give staff information on the following:

(a) Eligibility decision chart

(b) Administrative instruction on dependency status and dependency benefits (ST/AI/2000/8)

(c) List of supporting documents required for dependency claim

9. The following additional information is available via the drop-down list:

(a) Procedures to complete the e-P.84

(b) Frequently asked questions

(c) Relevant Staff Regulations, Rules, administrative instruction and information circular

(d) Link to the Human Resources Handbook

10. For technical inquiries, you may send an e-mail to hrsupport@un.org or contact us at 212-963-9711.

Annex II

Required documentation for continuance of the benefit

The following table summarizes the documentation required as evidence of a staff member's entitlement to dependency benefits for 2003.

For a spouse claimed as a dependant	Proof of gross occupational earnings: W2 form, tax return or statement of earnings from spouse's employer
For every child claimed as a dependant	An original birth certificate must be presented when the child is claimed as a dependant for the first time.
For a child under the age of 18 who resides with the staff member	No additional documentation required.
For a child(ren) of a staff member who is not the custodial parent	The original or certified copy of the divorce decree or other court document specifying the amount of child support to be paid by the staff member plus proof of payment in the year concerned in the form of original cancelled cheques, money order or wire transfer receipts, or bank transactions must be provided. The amount of payment should be at least the amount of the court-ordered child support, or the amount of the child dependency benefit, whichever is higher. In the absence of a court document, a notarized affidavit from the custodial parent must be provided attesting that the staff member provided continuing support and specifying the amounts paid during 2003, along with the proof of payment described in the previous paragraph.
For a child between the ages of 18 and 21[a]	Staff members who were not in receipt of an education grant should submit a completed Form P.41/B (Certificate of school attendance) for the school year 2003/04. The determination for 2004 will be provisional pending submission of the same form for the 2004/05 school year. Where the school year coincides with the calendar year, Form P.41/B should be submitted for 2003. No additional documentation is required for a child for whom the staff member received an education grant for the academic year 2003/04.
For a secondary dependant who resides with the staff member	Staff member's certification of support provided on the e-P.84
For a secondary dependant who did not reside with the staff member	Proof of all payment made to the secondary dependant during 2003 in the form of original cancelled cheques, money order or wire transfer receipts or records of bank transactions will be required.

[a] Dependency status is recognized through a period of vacation between school years when the child enrols for full-time attendance during the regular school year. Otherwise, the dependency status ceases as of the last day of full-time attendance at the educational institution. The requisite forms are available on iSeek under Staff information more.../Forms or from the Executive or Administrative Offices at Headquarters and local Personnel Offices.